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Nanotechnology R&D Bill Introduced

By [Roy Mark](#)

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Legislation to provide \$2.1 billion over three years for nanotechnology research and development programs was filed last week by U.S. Reps. Mike Honda (D.Calif.) and Sherwood Boehlert (R. N.Y.). The bill would support nanotechnology programs at the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, the Department of Commerce, NASA, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Nanotechnology is the top inter-agency priority in the Bush Administration's fiscal 2004 proposed budget for non-medical, civilian scientific and technological research and development.

According to Honda, H.R. 766, the [Nanotechnology Research and Development Act of 2003](#), bill provides a formal structure for coordination of research across the agencies, emphasizes interdisciplinary research, addresses societal concerns raised by nanotechnology, and requires outside reviews of the program.

"This \$2.1 billion investment for nanotechnology research and development will go a long way in developing a new economic engine for this country," said Honda. "Nanotechnology will have a dramatic impact on society, and it is critical that the U.S. has structures in place that allow us to assess and understand technical issues, as well as the social, ethical, philosophical, and legal issues that will arise."

Boehlert, chairman of the House Science Committee, added, ""Nanotechnology may be the 'smallest' field of science -- the manipulating of individual atoms. But I've come to understand that in science and technology, few things could actually be bigger than nanotechnology in terms of its potential to revolutionize scientific and engineering research, improve human health and bolster our economy."

The bill would also help ensure a steady stream of R&D dollars to Honda's Silicon Valley district. Last year, the area was named the top "Place To Watch" in the race to become the nation's economic center of nanotechnology and microsystems technology by Small Times magazine, a nanotechnology publication. The technology base has already led to the formation of several formal and informal networks and think tanks dedicated to nanotechnology, designed to enhance the development of the field in the region.

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